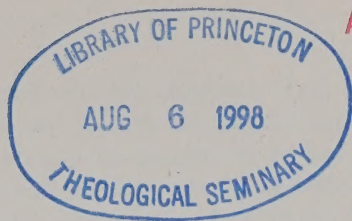


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National Council of the
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The outreach in southern
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The Outreach in Southern Asia

*Committee for Southern Asia of the
Division of Foreign Missions, NCCC*

The Outreach in Southern Asia

As the nations of Southern Asia consolidate the achievements of their political independence, profound movements toward improved conditions for their people are taking place. The increasing momentum and force of the changes have produced a revolutionary situation to which Christian missions have contributed in the past, and in which they are themselves now involved. This involvement has a special character, for it is by engaging in meeting the needs of the people of India, Pakistan and Ceylon that missions find themselves participating with the churches in the Christian life and work of these lands. To meet the new order both missions and churches must have an authentic direction. The purpose here is to seek to discern the main objectives of the mission boards represented on the Southern Asia Committee as they work together, and with the churches in Southern Asia in their missionary outreach during the next few years. A great deal that is important to the mission boards in their own work cannot be mentioned here. Also much that is being done through missionary cooperation in other Western lands lies beyond the scope of this statement. But it should be recognized that there is a constant interchange of ideas and a sharing of plans, without which the thought and work of the Southern Asia Committee would have much less value for its members.

THE CHURCHES AND MISSIONS

When Protestant missions came to Southern Asia there were churches in the southwestern coastal region which by tradition had an apostolic origin. The churches resulting from modern missionary work and those having an ancient ancestry form a Christian community in India and Pakistan averaging today about one in fifty of the total population. In Ceylon, where Christians form one in twelve of the population, it is stated that the Church in its English work has grown since the beginning of the century; but almost everywhere, and in every denomination the Sinhalese-speaking section of the Church is smaller, and the missionary work in Sinhalese less than fifty years ago.

The integration of their work into the structure of the younger churches by various patterns and to different degrees has become a common objective among missionary groups. An earlier union of Presbyterian and Congregational Churches in South India was followed by a more comprehensive union with others in the Church of South India, consummated in 1947, and continuing since then by the addition of several remaining sections of the original uniting churches. In Ceylon and in North India and Pakistan, negotiations toward union have continued among several major denominations with the expectation of a decision within the next few years.* The negotiations toward church union in South India were initiated when an inter-denominational conference on evangelism in 1919 faced "together the titanic task of the winning of India for Christ" and confessed itself "rendered weak and relatively impotent by our unhappy divisions." This awareness of the undivided evangelistic task in India, Ceylon and Pakistan provides a major incentive for visible unity.

Missions have had an active role in this emerging pattern of relationship, usually adjusting themselves without loss of momentum to the new conditions created by the growing consciousness of national churches, and the changing influences of national life. But missions have had to become more flexible and resilient, as they yield, or are deprived of, the initiative which at one time made it possible for them to accomplish much of their work. In the present situation they are being tested to see whether their imagination and dedication of resources are sufficient to give them a continuing place in the rapid flow of events. Meanwhile, the recent appearance of sectarian and non-denominational missionary groups has complicated the scene of comity and cooperation. These new interests confuse the non-Christian public and national governments; and, in some cases, seem to offer resources that surpass those of the growing forces of Christian solidarity.

The most recent missionary outreach and consolidation is found in the United Mission to Nepal, in which a number of denominational organizations have joined with the intention of establishing one church from the beginning. The ability to combine organized Indian church and missionary resources in the United Mission has not yet been realized, nor has agreement been reached on the form and

*Plans of the two negotiations for church union are available at the Christian Literature Society, P.O. Box 501, Park Town, Madras.

doctrine of the church which it is hoped will come from these missionary efforts. It is apparent that medical, educational and literacy work are more easily comprehended in a united scheme that does not touch vitally on the organization, ministry and sacraments of any church that may come into existence.

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

Certain events in this first decade of national independence are exerting a major influence on the character of missionary work.

The Political Cast. The close relations of churches in Southern Asia with Western churches and their missionary organizations have proved to be an element of strength through the first years of independence; but in the case of Ceylon and India, this relationship has increasingly caused distrust among certain sections of the non-Christian public. This world political struggle has inevitably gripped Asia as other continents, making it impossible for some, who in any case have an antipathy toward the evangelistic purpose of the Christian Church, to recognize the nature of what Christians call religious liberty, or the right to proclaim their faith as well as to practice it. The recent publication in India of the reports of two state government committees that had enquired into missionary activities, while not reflecting any national government policy, are evidence of an increased Hindu uneasiness over Christian intentions, and of a changing attitude toward an Indian Church greatly dependent on its foreign connections. Similarly in Ceylon, the report of the Buddhist Committee of Inquiry accuses the Christian Church of having had such preferential treatment under foreign rule, particularly in the field of education, as to have arrested the normal growth of Buddhist activities. But beyond these religious antipathies, the currents of public feeling and governmental restraint limit the former freedom of missionary activities in India and Ceylon. To appraise these forces of disapproval becomes an obligation of all who are directly interested in the continuation of missionary work.

In Pakistan little change is perceptible in the missionary situation. Missions experience no difference in the common Muslim attitude to the Christian message, but they are allowed freedom to extend their work along traditional lines. In relation to recent events, the attitude toward Christian work in the kingdom of Nepal

has decisively changed, for missionaries are being cautiously admitted for the first time, and the Christian witness is allowed under certain conditions. The immensely intricate configuration of current political events in Southern Asia leaves less room for free missionary activity, but it can be said that the essential Christian task continues unimpaired.

The Form of the Religions. In our times the strong, rapid currents in Southern Asia have cut new channels for the ancient religions. Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam — these faiths are found in familiar places and forms, but in a vastly changing scene of human interest and endeavor. Where Christian missionary concern has been expressed toward those who represent the highest forms of the three non-Christian religions, the response in conversion to Christian faith has been small. But modification of the social and intellectual expressions of the religions has resulted from the impact of Christian thought and action upon them. The largest movements into the Church have been from among the lower social and religious orders, where the greatest dissatisfaction with the customary status and religion had been created. The resistance to Christian evangelism aroused among Buddhists and Hindus alike has strengthened the movements opposing the growth of the Church, and these religions now assume a missionary role of their own. Islam in Pakistan appears less intolerant of Christian claims than elsewhere, but the greatest response to Christian preaching recently has been from a Hindu group that remained after the mass exodus of 1947-48. In India, while group movements among the lowest castes have continued to the present, bringing numerous adherents into the Church, they are now less extensive. Tribal peoples have also continued in some areas to seek Christian baptism; but with them, as in the case of other responsive groups, conversion is increasingly resisted by the neighboring Hindus, who frequently prefer to interpret such movements as religiously and politically undesirable.

Non-Christian religions are being shaped by revolutionary forces that compel an examination of historic positions, and adjustment to the new political and social conditions. They are required to acknowledge the increasing authority of civil governments, reforming the social codes that were once an integral part of religion, and reflecting the growing secular influences. The sources of new life in these religions are largely due to the

alliance of old cultures with modern ideals of justice, equality and international peace. The place of these faiths in world life is gained by a kind of missionary vision, inspired by a widespread interest among western people in their development, as well as by their cultural identity with the new democratic nations. It is notable that, while Buddhism is welcomed back to India with government patronage, and Christianity in the form of the ancient Syrian Church is openly accepted as one of the religions historically belonging to India, the Christian activity which causes real unrest is the expression of the faith in the universal lordship of Jesus Christ. Hindu and Buddhist reaction considers that this adversely reflects upon the abiding truth and satisfying reality of these faiths, making them appear to be the objects of a kind of Christian intolerance. The relation of the major religious concerns and forces has become again a matter of fundamental missionary interest in Southern Asia, where the former postures of these faiths and their activities with regard to each other have altered. World events move upon the stage, while religious attitudes and emotions are expressed in the dynamic scene of national life. The Christian religion in personal and corporate forms is a part of the new situation, and its future will be determined by inherent character and through constant adjustment with other religions.

The Shape of the Mission. Some recent developments cannot be indicated, but it is necessary to gain a sense of proportion and the shape of things to come. In the light of the missionary concern it can be asked what is happening that illuminates the motives and directions of Christian work, especially in the relations of Asian and Western churches? From the broadest perspective it should be said that the churches of Asia have become aware of each other and of the continuing missionary task in the area. During the last decade in a number of conferences, sponsored by ecumenical and national church organizations, the churches' awareness of the Asian world has greatly deepened. Their responsibility for the proclamation of the Gospel has grown and Christian social and religious problems are increasingly recognized. There is a deeper national identification. Whatever the immediate value of these conferences, the trend toward mutual assistance and the interchange of experience is plain. Further, the awareness of the calling of the Church to its mission in Asia is a prominent feature of the meetings. That this involves the churches in some form of unity becomes in-

creasingly clear. The most valuable utilization of the resources of Western churches as they seek to assist the missionary calling in Asia, comes from the knowledge of Christ's calling, varied in form but undivided in meaning.

Within the frame of this ecumenical life there exist the national and regional forms of cooperation in institution, field and council. The National Christian Councils in India, Ceylon and West Pakistan have increased their full and part-time staffs and broadened their functions and activities. In East Pakistan the Council, which is federated with that in West Pakistan, has sought in a few years to make its work significant for the churches of that area. The value of the councils has been repeatedly enforced by their functions in relation to their governments and to public questions for which they have become the voice of Christian opinion and the means of invaluable consultation among the non-Roman churches. The manifold activities of the councils continue to arise out of the cooperative response to the needs of many groups. Since the support of the councils in Southern Asia is largely derived from outside sources, the question of their responsible relationship to their member churches has been more and more insistent. Even now the National Christian Council of India, with a full-time central staff of five secretaries and as many more departmental staff members, is considering the means by which its support can be obtained through member churches, though a major part may still be required from mission boards and societies at the churches' request.

The growing awareness of the responsibility mission and church agencies have for the vocation of Christian men and women in professional and public life, as well as in the whole-time service of the Church, has been most significantly expressed in medical education at Vellore and Ludhiana in India. The incorporation of the missionary outlook in a professional education according to government standards offers a constant challenge to the staffs of the two institutions. The need for Indian doctors and nurses whose purpose is to continue the missionary character of Christian hospitals, has priority in the aims of Vellore and Ludhiana. These developments require an extensive cooperation in United States and Great Britain, as well as India.

Christian educational and medical institutions in recent years have erected new buildings, opened new departments, conformed

to new standards, and accepted larger numbers of patients and students, without greatly changing their original pattern. They continue much as before, but more extensive, more efficient and with better results. Comparatively few institutions have been opened since 1947, and experimental work with a consciously Christian motivation has not been extensive. In West Pakistan the plight of the refugees provided the occasion for a united Christian hospital in the buildings of Forman Christian College, but a decision must now be reached cooperatively as to its future. Some questions as to purpose, value and balance of interest in institutional work will be met from time to time, as, for instance, in the survey of Christian higher education which the National Christian Council of India is planning to make.

PROBLEMS AND POSSIBILITIES

The Church and Evangelism. For many years it has been generally recognized in Southern Asia that evangelism belongs to the essential life of the Church, and that the task cannot be imposed from without. The principle that the Church should be free from outside direction and dependence in order to become spontaneously responsive to the Holy Spirit has appealed to many. But it has not been put into effect to any great extent. Methods of evangelism have been widely adopted, but much of the initiative for their use has been found among missionaries. Leaflet and newspaper evangelism, Bible correspondence courses, literature, audio-visual aids, radio and other media of communication have succeeded to the extent that the Church's responsibility for them has been recognized. Inherently it is the witness of the Christian person that is the indispensable element in evangelism, and the churches have grown as the force of the new life of men and women has been exerted. Group movements have continued though on a diminished scale, and there are those who come individually into the membership of the Church. With the new sensitiveness in some areas to open evangelistic work among non-Christians, the necessity of making the proclamation of the Gospel a natural part of the Christian life and outlook is apparent. In some areas a united approach of churches and missionary groups has made it possible to enter otherwise "unevangelized areas."

Evangelism will need to be thought of more intelligently, and with a concern to understand the Hindu, Buddhist and Muslim frames of mind and experience. The necessity of communicating with the adherents of other religious faiths has been pressing itself increasingly on thoughtful Christians. The study centers in Ceylon, India and West Pakistan are a new possibility in evangelism.

Christian Social Welfare. The social and economic origins of the large majority of Christian people in India and Pakistan have seriously handicapped their progress to a more self-reliant existence. Rural mass-movements from among groups low in the scale of Hindu society have determined the dependent and underdeveloped state in which hundreds of thousands of Christian people have found themselves. Education has reached some, and improved occupation has bettered their standard of life. But illiteracy, estimated in some sections to be as high as 85%, and inferior employment, or worse still, unemployment, stand as insuperable obstacles in the way of any self-improvement.

The situation in many parts of Southern Asia requires a plan that will embrace both the economic and the educational aspects, and a coordinated outlook for the various organizations that are concerned to do something about it. The place for this general attack on the whole problem is obviously the Christian councils with their existing departments which may need to work in closer consultation and awareness of a total objective. Here relief and rehabilitation, economic life, education and literacy need to be considered in the whole scope of the problem. Separate plans are necessary to cope with particular situations but their coordination at some point is essential to the best results. In the United States a great deal of initiative and support is being realized through Church World Service, the Committee on World Literacy and Christian Literature, Rural Missions, and the mission boards with their denominational work. There is therefore a possible basis for consultation both here and in India and Pakistan, to make clearer objectives and realistic estimates of our capability of reaching them in an appreciable time. It should be determined what the specific goal in each case is to be, e.g. for village education. So far as they are responsible should missions consider the values of Basic Education in India? The National Christian Council of India this year has urged the fullest support of Basic Education.

A reconsideration of the functions and purpose of village schools is now before the West Pakistan Council, and a study of the Rural Church is being conducted in that country under the direction of Dr. Richard Comfort of the National Council of Churches in the U.S.A. Some American laymen are currently considering the setting up of an organization which will be concerned to assist Pakistani Christians in their economic plight. Church World Service has placed large resources at the disposal of the West Pakistan Committee on Relief and Rehabilitation. The Committee on Christian Literature and World Literacy is considering how it may more effectively help to meet the illiteracy of the rural Christian community. These and other efforts may most effectively operate as they are guided toward realizable goals, established through united planning in which the Southern Asia Committee and the West Pakistan Council should provide the central coordination.

Similarly in India, where the problem of achieving social welfare in the rural Christian community is deeply rooted, realistic plans should be made to meet the whole problem. This will require more coordination than has yet been achieved, and a use of experience to guide in setting goals that are within reach. Much has been learned in the field of economic relief and improvement, where self-help projects initiated by the National and Regional Councils deal with problems that can be encompassed by a village community. This can be combined with other experience in rural reconstruction, relief and rehabilitation, literacy and village education.

In the general field of Indian social problems and concern, the Christian Institute for the Study of Society and the Committee for Literature on Social Concerns, having autonomous committees, and being sponsored by the National Christian Council, have helped to sharpen the social consciousness and outlook of the churches. These organizations with their Indian personnel have existed largely through funds supplied from abroad, but their work is of such significance to the Church in India that its continuation needs to be ensured.

The Christian Retreat and Study Centre, at Rajpur in north India, has passed through an experimental period under mission and church direction, in which it has endeavored to provide a place for spiritual retreat and the study of specific problems in the life and work of the churches in the North. Inaugurated by the

Presbyterian Board of Missions, the Centre in future will be dependent on interdenominational support.

Leadership for the Church. The National Christian Council of India has recently undertaken a review of theological education to determine what progress has been achieved in the last decade. It has been found that the enrollment in the (diploma) theological schools and the (degree) colleges has increased by nearly 100% in each case. In spite of this improvement, a lack continues where there are estimated to be only 3,000 ordained ministers for about 25,000 congregations. Some of the theological schools and colleges have been considerably improved and enlarged during the last ten years, and many express no great need of additional finance at present. Some union institutions, however, are considerably hindered by lack of funds; very few have any assured income from endowments; and almost all depend on grants from mission boards, in addition to what they receive from the churches in India.

Since 1947 theological education in West Pakistan has been concentrated at Gujranwala where six denominations are represented. There are plans for improvement and expansion in which all have a part. The essential role of the Seminary in the life of the churches being assured, there is no outstanding difficulty in the way of continued cooperation.

The system of Indian theological education is largely centralized in the Serampore University Senate, with which eighteen schools and colleges are affiliated. These colleges are unable to increase their annual membership fees sufficiently to supply the present lack in the Senate's staff and equipment. Several of the American Boards are arranging special grants as a means to strengthen the structure of theological education as related to the Senate.

To meet the inadequacy in the supply of full-time, paid ministers, especially for rural congregations, a new pattern is being considered. The Church of South India has made provision for the ordination of voluntary pastors, who may give only part of their time to the ministry of the local church. Generally, however, among the churches no similar plan exists, and the number of persons who have thus far entered the voluntary ordained ministry is very small.

In view of the changing situation, the National Christian Council of India has conducted a pilot survey of Bible Schools (in Tamilnad and Karnataka) to formulate a possible policy, discover new emphases, and suggest plans for a different use of the existing institutions. One result thus far has been to recognize two opposing points of view on the value of paid unordained pastors and evangelists. Some would omit these categories in any new pattern of the ministry; others feel that it is not possible yet to dispense with them. It seems to be agreed that such unordained workers should now spend a large part of their time in helping to train voluntary village workers, on whom the main responsibility must rest for carrying on the ministry of numerous congregations.

The replacement of missionary by national personnel is another point from which to look at the question of leadership for the Church in India, including the staffing of educational and medical institutions. A study made by the Rev. George Leeder of the replacements in the India missions of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., gave the Southern Asia Committee a typical view. His conclusions show that since 1935: (a) In evangelistic units of work there is a definite decrease in the total of missionary and Indian personnel, and the Church (U.C.N.I.) appears not to have assumed a larger share in direct evangelistic work as a result. (b) Nationalization of educational units of work has kept pace with the need of the institutions as the number of missionary personnel has decreased. (c) Replacement of missionary doctors and nurses has progressed more slowly, due to the rising standards of qualification for medical institutions. It is widely held that in order to meet the need for further replacements, the Church in India should continue to receive special scholarship help for the training of dedicated, able young Christians.

Indigenization and Financial Support. Dr. David G. Moses, speaking of the churches of Southern Asia has said that "barring a few notable exceptions, they are all pale and anemic imitations of the churches of the West." The intense movements toward nationalization in India and Ceylon, with their emphasis on the value of the historical cultures of these lands, make more apparent the lack of an indigenous cultural aspect to the churches. What should be the Indian character of the Church? For their part can missionaries and mission boards do anything to meet the problem?

The integration of the foreign mission into the Indian church organization, and the replacement of missionary by Indian personnel does not by itself provide a sufficient answer. Dr. P. D. Devanandan observes that we have looked at Indianization very much in terms of the political change that came over the country in the last two generations. But the issue has shifted from external administration "to the inner workings of the spirit in which control is exercised and the ends to which it is directed... In the Government of India the replacing of Englishmen by Indians in places of authority was only the beginning of the process of 'Indianization'; but the Indian Church seems to think that this is the end."

The formation of the All-India Federation of National Churches is more than an annoying feature in the contemporary picture of church life. It represents a small but vocal minority that is a warning to Indian churches, and to the mission boards in the United States where the Federation is collecting funds.

The lack of indigenization is partly due to the large amount of foreign money that is channeled into every form of church life in Southern Asia, thus restraining the essential independence of the Christian life and its relatedness to national culture and society. Missionaries for themselves increasingly believe, as one group has stated, that "the easy availability of large sums of money from abroad is the chief stumbling-block to the development of an independent and self-supporting Indian Church." Remedial measures are not easily discovered. Where can the initiative be found for ending the financial dependence of the Church in its worship and evangelism? Some believe the mission boards should take a sympathetic and positive first step. But the problem must be actively met from within the Church as well, and it is abundantly clear that present movements toward "self-support" must increase if the goal is to be reached within an ascertainable time. One element in the situation of dependence is the system that has built up a large rural membership of the Church, pastored by those who can visit their congregations only occasionally and are paid largely by foreign funds. The transfer to a system of local support can only be made with extreme difficulty. One secretary estimates that in the rural areas where his missionary society has the responsibility for continuing support to numerous congregations, the percentage of local giving for Indian pastoral and evangelistic workers varies from 12 to 33% of the total, the balance being

realized by mission grants. Facing the dilemma, he asks, "What action can be taken by a missionary society to promote and stimulate change, and what changes are possible which will substantially decrease this dependence, and at the same time provide for Christian work to continue, especially in very backward village areas?" The measures suggested, briefly stated are: an increase in giving, a reduction of grants by the mission board or society on a gradual scale; and what is considered to be the task of first importance today, the training of voluntary lay leadership at all levels. To this training the energies of those who are engaged in full-time church work, Indian and foreign, should be bent.

The situation raises a difficult question. Can foreign funds be channeled and used so as not to hamper the freedom of the Spirit in the Church? Answers will lie in the decision of those who have the ability to judge the needs of each area of concern, each institution and organization in terms of the degree of its essentiality to the ongoing missionary task and its ability to create the conditions of spiritual freedom and practical service. Mission boards for their part should evaluate their work by what will contribute most to the development of responsibility in the churches, and not by the availability of funds. The problem is manifold and the possibilities of meeting it are as numerous.

Foreign Missionaries and the Mission of the Churches. The churches in Southern Asia have shown a certain missionary interest for many years, most prominently expressed in the National Missionary Society of India, which recently celebrated its fiftieth anniversary. A few Indian missionaries under church auspices have gone to Africa, Papua, Indonesia and other lands. The United Mission to Nepal has provided the most recent appeal for foreign missionary service originating in India. Although the limited financial resources of the churches will restrict the size of this outreach to other lands, the depth and extent of the concern need not be limited, but rather should be encouraged, by the current developments in Asia. The part which European and American missions may take in this missionary life will need to be determined by the national churches, without depending on the much greater resources of Western churches.

It has been repeatedly affirmed that the presence of missionaries from overseas churches is essential to the complete witness and service of the churches in Southern Asia. In India, where the

work of missionaries has most seriously been questioned, the expressed desire of representative Indian Christians is to continue "to have the advantage of friends and resources from the outside." One group in August, 1956, asked how this could be done in a manner consistent with the Church's "dignity, her independence, and her participation in national purposes and ideals." Finding it difficult to state a simple formula, they declared that each church would have to determine its special needs and invite the particular kind of fellow-worker desired.

While this refers more especially to missionaries from western lands, the interest has been repeatedly expressed in the coming of other Asian Christians to India for service in the Church. As this has not been explored to any extent, there is no proposal from the churches concerned. Since the limited financial ability of the Asian churches would prevent any serious consideration of a plan, it may be that the Southern Asia Committee should initiate a discussion of it.

A direct corollary of the willingness to receive in Southern Asia missionaries from lands in East and West is the readiness to send them to other countries, especially those with which there are at present no missionary relations. This requires vision, initiative and the practical means of sending and supporting those who carry the Christian faith among other peoples. Dependence for this must be on the Asian churches themselves, though the western missionary will consider this an essential part of the whole Church's outreach.

Agencies of Cooperation. The broadening functions of the National Christian Councils in India, Ceylon and Pakistan reflect an awareness not only of the values of cooperation, but of the necessity of viewing the Christian task as a whole. Rapid national developments in recent years emphasize the need of the most complete perspective possible. The councils have increased in service as the churches have grown in life and work. But this service has been largely made possible by financial support from other lands. A question now arises as to the strength of a council in terms of its financial dependence on sources from outside its constituent churches. The National Christian Council of India has embarked on a course of reorganization making its full membership consist of churches only, and securing from them the finance for its general budget. The churches in turn may request mission board assistance

as required to supplement their own contributions. The strength of this council has been in its coordination of many activities on behalf of churches, Christian institutions and organizations. An effort is now being made to overcome what is felt to be an excessive centralization, by devolving some of the responsibility on churches and regional councils. Autonomous service organizations are being created to continue the work of the Relief and the Audio-Visual Aids Committees. In the Southern Asia Committee concern has been expressed that this process not weaken the Council as an agency of cooperation in relation to the needs of the Indian churches, and that it not diminish the council's ability to recommend policy for missionary organizations, and aid from them for projects and programs in India.

Since the councils more than any other form of organization represent the churches cooperatively, it is through them that the independent groups working for the churches find their most representative expression. Thus, in Ceylon a former Sunday School organization has become a department of Christian education in the council. The integration of various functional activities within a council enables also mission boards overseas to assist the national churches in ways they could not otherwise do.

THE DIRECTION OF THE FUTURE

Certain objectives can be discerned in what the mission boards are doing both individually and jointly; and in what the churches are increasingly undertaking as their own task. Since the churches have come to a place of responsibility for their life and ministry and are more and more supporting themselves, it is important that their participation in the missionary movement should become the best expression of their service and witness to Christ as Lord. In the historic missionary outreach a new relationship of interdependence can be formed between the churches abroad and those in Southern Asia. This outgoing purpose of the churches in Southern Asia is the essential condition of their part in a total missionary life and work, bringing them to respond in ever greater measure to Christ's call to make disciples of all nations.

The following objectives are specified in order to make the cooperative task clear and compelling in the largest sense. The

Southern Asia Committee in accepting these aims believes they can be recommended as the course of action most likely to be fruitful in the future. As such, they become proposals for the serious consideration of the boards and organizations represented on the Southern Asia Committee.

OBJECTIVES IN CEYLON

As the American Board of Commissioners has been the only member of the Southern Asia Committee with work in Ceylon, the Committee's support of cooperative projects did not commence until 1955, after the National Christian Council had assumed an active role in the Christian life of the country. The financial assistance of the Committee has been provided at three points: for the support of the Council's secretariat, the production of new literature, and the Institute of Buddhist Studies. More effective communications need to be established with the Council in Ceylon in order to make the Committee's participation a responsible missionary concern on behalf of the boards.

Literature. With the aid of the Committee on World Literacy and Christian Literature in the United States, the literature department of the National Christian Council has changed "a situation of despair when nothing was being written or printed in Sinhalese because no one was able to finance the production of literature for such a comparatively small language group." The newly formed Committee for the Production of Christian Literature will be primarily occupied with the publication of literature in Sinhalese. Political and religious events in Ceylon make this urgent for evangelism and church life.

Christian Institute of Buddhist Studies. The National Christian Council has taken the first step toward establishing a well-equipped center for Buddhist Studies to be under the direction of a competent Buddhist scholar. Study conferences have been held by the part-time staff and a valuable Christian News Bulletin has been published in English, Sinhalese and Tamil. As local support will provide only a part of the Institute's budget, the remainder must come from abroad, and the Southern Asia Committee has accepted responsibility for a share.

OBJECTIVES IN EAST PAKISTAN

The newly organized East Pakistan Christian Council operates with meager resources in this land where churches and missions are confronted with imposing problems. The Church of God is the only member of the Southern Asia Committee having work in East Pakistan, but the strengthening of the Council and its cooperative activities has appealed to the Committee and related organizations as essential to their concern in the whole area. This takes three forms: aid to the Council's administrative work, assistance in the economic development and help in the production of literature.

Rural and Economic Development. East Pakistan has 52% of Pakistan's total population in a predominantly rural economy. The social and economic insecurity of the community of 50,000 Christians has been intensified since the "partition" of Bengal in 1947. Some of the assistance needed to improve the economic conditions of this Christian group has been undertaken by Church World Service in such projects as the Christian cooperative at Khulna.

Literature. The Committee for Literature and Sunday Schools of the East Pakistan Council has begun work, supported by the missions in the country and, more largely, by the Committee on World Literacy and Christian Literature in the United States. This co-operative production of educational materials and evangelistic literature is strengthening Christian solidarity and the Council's service for the churches.

OBJECTIVES IN WEST PAKISTAN

Approximately 325,000 Protestant Christians are represented in the West Pakistan Christian Council which, since its organization as a National Council in 1950, has expressed a growing solidarity among the churches and missions. The occasions for cooperative Christian work have been multiplied since the political "partition" in 1947, placing a greater responsibility upon this Council and its related institutions. Recent cooperative approaches in West Pakistan have shown how the resources of the boards can be put at the disposal of the churches. Where united work is possible there should be wider coordination to make projects effective. Thus, economic development, educational and rural church surveys, literacy and public health projects can best be planned and executed as they become a recognized part of the

total need of the Church in West Pakistan. There should be the closest consultation between the mission boards, the Southern Asia Committee and the West Pakistan Christian Council. It ought to be considered whether the Southern Asia Committee, with its concern for the whole of Asia is best organized at present to meet the occasions for united planning in West Pakistan.

The Rural Church. The high rate of illiteracy among Christians in rural areas (estimated to be above 85%), and the acute degree of their poverty compounded with spiritual backwardness, call for active measures. There is the educational problem revealed in four districts of the Punjab where between the ages of 5 and 16 only 15% of the Christian children go to school or college. Missionary educators believe the situation cannot be met simply by opening more schools of the conventional kind. A system of education with new values and goals is indicated. An Educational Survey in 1955, and a Rural Church Survey commencing at the end of 1956, will point the way to some solutions. Their importance for the mission boards has been found in the call to build again the foundations of child education — a task from which the boards have practically withdrawn, but which, it is stated, “a sober analysis in Pakistan presents as an unescapable necessity if a young church is to arise from its disinherited status to newness of life and make a proper Christian witness in the new nation.”

The Ministry and its Training. At the Gujranwala Theological Seminary six major Protestant church bodies cooperate for the training of their ministry. The Seminary's Advance Program calls for sharing in the planning and costs of the minimum requirements for effective training, including rural extension work, Urdu texts, and library and audio-visual equipment.

A basic concern should now be the recruitment and training of the ministry, with the related questions of ministerial function and support. Present conditions among the churches in West Pakistan emphasize the importance of a study by the Christian Council of the conception and work of the ministry, with special reference to rural areas where the spiritual, social and economic problems create a situation requiring cooperative attention.

Literacy. The prevalence of illiteracy among rural Christian people is a problem for all churches. The Committee on World Literacy and Christian Literature is preparing to undertake with the Christian Council a three to five year pilot project, following

the pattern of the center in Minia, Egypt, where literacy work has become a means to the revival and well being of local churches and communities. In West Pakistan this would become a service center requiring no capital investment. Personnel with certain technical skills, and finance for a modest budget are needed from the mission boards.

Economic Life. Numerous rural Christians in desperate poverty are being forced into cities to seek employment and live under slum conditions. To help them become established in some occupation or small industry offers a more promising future than were they to remain in the villages where few can hope to own land. Economic schemes must be on a long-term basis, developing skills through education, and establishing the people in community life. One movement to assist in this direction, now being contemplated by a group of American laymen, is being related to the Christian Council staff and funds will be essential. Any concern expressed for the economic problem of Christians in West Pakistan should have an outlet in plans supported by the Council and the mission boards, and guided by experience in other countries.

Emergency Relief. Repeated natural calamities have increased the plight of people already economically handicapped, and have necessitated the provision of emergency relief supplies by the Council with Church World Service. The availability of American surplus foods has brought a new concept of relief in terms of the normal living conditions of under-developed peoples. Through funds provided by CWS small rehabilitation projects can be undertaken and coordinated by the council with other schemes, such as in "Economic Life" above.

Medical Service. The United Christian Hospital, which was created in response to the plight of the refugees in 1947-48, has continued to serve as a union institution in Lahore. The major responsibility for future development and support will rest on the Presbyterian (USA) and Methodist Boards of Missions. The informal conferences that have been convened by the Southern Asia Committee's office should give place to a representative committee in the United States in which those concerned can join in supporting the Hospital.

The Islamics Center. The plans for establishing a center for the Christian study of contemporary Islam and witness to Muslims in Pakistan will take definite shape when the co-directors ap-

pointed by the Council begin their work in 1957. Primarily the Center will seek to help Christians in knowing how to make their witness to Muslims more relevant and effective. A large part of the necessary funds for the program will need to be found outside Pakistan, and the Southern Asia Committee is prepared to help in the support of the Center. But the mission boards should not only supply funds, they should make use of the facilities of the Center through their missionaries and by encouraging the churches.

Functions of the Southern Asia Committee. This consideration of the emerging interests in the missionary situation in West Pakistan raises a question as to the more effective use of the Committee's facilities and its secretarial office. Are the cooperative requirements in West Pakistan receiving adequate provision in the present organization and work of the Southern Asia Committee? The different missionary concerns in India and in West Pakistan suggest that occasionally at least, the representatives of the mission boards having work in West Pakistan should meet to consider the problems there.

Practical difficulties arise in any thought of a separate committee for Pakistan. But it should be possible to meet them without great expenditure of time and effort, by some effective linkage of a specifically Pakistan group to the Southern Asia Committee with which it could have administrative unity. The Southern Asia Committee would continue as at present to be primarily occupied with general matters, and more specifically, with India questions.

PRIORITIES IN WEST PAKISTAN

In view of the foregoing considerations the Southern Asia Committee expects to give major attention to certain problems in the years immediately ahead. By assisting the churches and the Christian Council, it is hoped that priority can be given to the following:

A study of the recruitment, training and support of the ministry. These are vitally related questions, and a fresh approach to them is essential to the growth of the Church and the expression of its own missionary outreach.

Experimental work to discover a more adequate rural educational system for Christian groups.

A pilot project in literacy, centered in the rural churches and designed to generate a movement of renewal in community life.

Continual occupation with ways and means of meeting the economic problem of the Christian community.

Active support of the Center to study contemporary Islam in Pakistan, and train Christians in the witness to Muslims.

OBJECTIVES IN INDIA

Indian national developments in recent years have intensified some concerns which have long been expressed by church leaders and missionaries, but which have been met only partly by their plans and achievements. Because certain objectives are believed to be inherently right for the Church, more adequate and vigorous means should be sought for meeting the problems that are now emphasized. Attention here must be confined to the situations that mainly affect the growth, witness and service of the churches, particularly as these find expression in the thought and actions of the National Christian Council.

The Indigenous Church. Since the dependence of the churches in India on foreign assistance has affected their ability to be indigenous in worship, witness and service, this becomes a concern of the missionary agencies which have the purpose of helping the churches become more vitally related to their national environment. A major object of the overseas missionary movement must therefore be to help the churches in this period of difficult but promising transition.

Theological Education has had consistent study for fifteen years, and the Board of Theological Education of the National Christian Council is now making a fresh appeal for support of the institutions. The developments at *Serampore* in the theological department and Senate should be kept in view as an essential part of the whole plan.

The English editions of the theological texts and study books in the Christian Students Library, which are being published in India, have received recognition in other Asian countries, and larger numbers of each are now being printed. Since the cost of translating and publishing in several major Indian languages will be greater than the income from sales, these editions must there-

fore be subsidized. The Southern Asia Committee is seeking to secure \$15,000 as its share of the fund for this purpose.

The relatively high costs of theological education, and the dependence of many of the schools and colleges on missionary organizations abroad, constitute a problem. The request from India for funds to establish *endowments* in India ought to be considered, especially in relation to the situation that would arise if support could no longer be received from abroad.

Rural congregations in many areas do not have an adequate ministry by means of the traditional system of whole-time leadership. The lack in spiritual and moral life because of this situation requires more active thinking about the training and service of honorary ministers and voluntary lay workers. The National Christian Council's Pilot Survey of Bible Schools in 1956 pointed the way to the latter, and sharpened the question as to the nature and function of the traditional Bible Schools in relation to the work of the indigenous Church. The institutes and training schemes for village leaders that have been conducted for some years under two Regional Councils, with funds supplied by two American mission boards, will continue to have importance and should be closely related to the results of the recent studies of the National Christian Council.

The churches' dependence on foreign support for much of their essential ministry and evangelistic activity should now be considered in relation to their spiritual effectiveness and developments in the nation. The system as well as the amounts of foreign aid, on which many rural churches still greatly depend, should be changed with the least possible hardship. While doing so, the mission boards will need to act with the churches as they more and more study ways by which the ministry and lay service of rural congregations can be adequately provided. The pattern of the ministry changes as the problems of financial dependence and absentee pastorates are solved. The situation calls for active mission board consultation with those who are responsible for the churches' ministry, in order to find the way to a more concerted and purposeful dealing with the problem.

The value of some provision for advanced theological study in India was forcefully expressed by the National Christian Council in *The Christian Minister in India* in 1943. The Southeast Asia Conference on Theological Education in 1956 emphasized the need

of a center in Asia, "so that Asian students will not have to depend entirely on Western universities for advanced research in theological subjects." Such a faculty would also help the churches to train the Asian theological teachers required by the theological institutions. While Bangalore, India, was given priority as a location, the place is of secondary importance.

The production of a new Sunday School Curriculum in India has already received the support of the mission boards, sufficient to insure their share in the whole plan. With the growing interest in Ceylon and West Pakistan in the production of similar curricula, the main work can still be done in India so that adaptations for these other countries should involve considerably less work and expense. Requests for the financial means to produce the materials will need to be considered in the light of circumstances.

The conditions for transferring mission property to responsible holding bodies or trusts in India are now less difficult and costly to meet. Legal counsel may be necessary for a period of time to assist the local representatives of the boards in effecting transfers, and it may be desirable to approach the National Council to engage this at board expense.

Education, Health and Social Welfare. Large scale institutional developments of missionary work in the past, while involving the boards in heavy commitments of personnel and finance, have at the same time provided an invaluable means of service. However, the conditions under which many institutions work are not the same as in the past, and possible developments need to be considered in relation to the value of the institutions for the Church and the missionary purpose.

The medical colleges at Vellore and Ludhiana provide outstanding evidence of the ability of Christian groups to act together in meeting an educational need. The existence of schools, colleges and hospitals should provide the incentive for rather than an hinderance to, experimentation in keeping with the changing needs of India. Special attention should be given to the survey of Christian Higher Education now being considered by the National Christian Council, the public health program of the Christian Medical Association, the growing importance of Basic Education in national life, and similar developments.

While the economic standards of Christian people cannot be greatly advanced beyond those of the general community, the value

of some current projects for improving the economic life of Christian village groups should be recognized. As directed and coordinated by the National and Regional Christian Councils, these short-term schemes are essential to the Christian concern for human welfare.

The emergency relief and surplus food commodities made available to all communities through Church World Service and the Councils' Committee on Relief and Gift Supplies continue to be valued for the needs they meet and the Christian concern they express. As long as the central distribution under Christian auspices allows, and the acceptability of the gifts is acknowledged by the government and people of India, this represents a continued claim upon American resources.

The development in the social outlook of the Protestant Christian community in India has been signalized in recent years by certain cooperative activities that should hold a place in plans for the future. The Christian Institute for the Study of Society and the Committee on Literature for Social Concerns have been organized and sponsored to a considerable extent by the National Christian Council, which has also made available from American sources a large part of their funds. The work of these organizations has been increasingly recognized in India and abroad. Their future depends on a broad base of support and service, and since the policy governing their work in related fields is so closely connected with their financial support, the National Christian Council has been asked to study and advise the Southern Asia Committee on the part it might have in continuing a coordinated program of study and literature for social concerns.

Evangelism. In India the traditional activity of overseas missionaries in evangelism is notably diminishing, and the new position affecting their part in proclaiming the Gospel is not yet fully apparent. While the missionary from abroad will support the churches in their evangelistic work, inherent in the call of the missionary himself is the impulse to make Christ known to all people. The spoken witness cannot be alienated from the missionary vocation, whatever its form or means.

In spite of overt opposition to the Christian's propagation of his religion, the Church in India continues to grow, and there is a clearer sense of Christian purpose in evangelism than before.

The Study Center on Hinduism, beginning work in 1957, will seek among other objects "to acquaint the Church with the funda-

mental structure of Hindu thought," and to assist it "in relating its message to the daily life of the non-Christian." Beginning on an exploratory basis, Dr. Devanandan, the director, will have conferences with missionaries and national workers in both North and South, and conduct extension courses and training institutes for voluntary lay leaders and full-time evangelists. Provision has been made for the initial needs of the Study Center, but it will be essential for the continued cooperative support of the mission boards.

Since the Study Center on Hinduism and the Henry Martyn School of Islamics will have some common interests, consultation on their purpose and work will be essential to their effectiveness and continued support by the mission boards.

The centralization of the *audio-visual aids and radio* work of the National Council has been proposed in order to consolidate them for the evangelistic and educational work of the churches. The Council has decided on a gradual, experimental approach to the plan to make these services centrally available and more adapted to indigenous needs. In view of the reorganization of the Council; involving an autonomous radio and audio visual aids organization, it will be essential for RAVEMCCO and the Southern Asia Committee to work closely toward the objectives chosen in India.

Literature and Literacy. The experience gained in producing and distributing *literature* in many Indian languages, as well as in English, has been greatly enhanced by cooperation in the National and Regional Councils. The decision to set up Language Area Literature Councils may entail considerable adjustment in relationships with both the Committee on World Literacy and Christian Literature, and the Southern Asia Committee. Special care will be required so as not to impair the various programs during the transition and afterwards.

A more difficult problem arises in connection with the decision of the Council to close its central department of *adult education* and regard this work henceforth as the responsibility of the churches. The question arises as to the future relation of the Committee on World Literacy and Christian Literature to the new pattern of literacy activity. To prevent loss to the churches, which still have the enormous problem of overcoming illiteracy among Christians, it is essential that some new form of participation for the world body be found in India's literacy task.

National Christian Council. With the reorganization of the National Christian Council, major adjustments in policy and support will be involved for the mission boards, and for the Southern Asia and related functional committees. The distribution of the work which missionary bodies have supported for so long, will require new means of communication, information, and discussion of plans for work.

Now that there is a council of churches in which missionary and other organizations have only an associate membership, it is important that the mission boards and the Southern Asia Committee help the Indian churches with which they are related to become aware of the larger responsibility being placed on them and their Regional Councils by this development. During the period of adjustment the financial support of the National and Regional Councils should not be allowed to suffer because of difficulties inherent in the reorganization.

PRIORITIES IN INDIA

From the consideration of these objectives the Southern Asia Committee has selected the following priorities for the next few years:

To provide the churches with every possible means for the strengthening of their pastoral care and leadership.

By encouraging a study of the life and growth of the Church in relation to its local ministry.

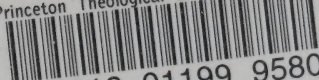
By providing means for the training of voluntary leaders, both men and women.

By strengthening theological education in union institutions, and especially the Serampore Senate and Theological School.

By helping the churches increase the sense and vision of stewardship in their entire life, and not merely as "self-support."

By encouraging plans for decreasing dependence on foreign funds in the essential life and ministry of the Church.

To keep clearly in view that all missionary personnel and projects are designed to further the evangelistic and missionary outreach of the churches in India, so that these churches may send missionary help abroad as well as receive it.



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To support the new Center for the study of Hinduism as a means by which the Christian witness can be more effectively given and the Gospel proclaimed in contemporary India.

To provide assistance in the Christian education of the local congregation, by supporting the production of the new Sunday School curriculum and the training of leadership under the Indian Sunday School Union.

To make provision for the publication of literature:

Theological texts in the Christian Students Library series and especially the Indian language editions.

Indian language magazines to be published by the new regional literature councils.

Publications on social issues by the Special Committee for Literature on Social Concerns.

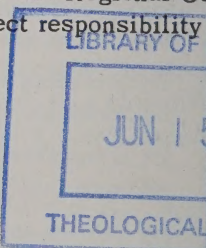
To support the re-organization under Indian leadership of the Audio-Visual Service Council.

To study the significance of Basic Education for Christian schools, and to support the study and recommendations of the National Christian Council Commission on Higher Education.

To move forward in the transfer of property to responsible trustees in India.

In relation to their contribution to the whole Christian task, continue the financial support of the National and Regional Councils, assisting the change in India to the direct responsibility of the churches for the councils.

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